



Secretary of State Jason Kander
Election Review
May 11, 2016

St. Louis County – 2016 Municipal Election

Background

During the 2016 municipal election, the St. Louis County Board of Election Commissioners (Board) failed to provide a sufficient number of ballots at their polling places, which affected approximately 63 precincts. This resulted in some voters in the affected polling places being unable to cast a

ballot at their designated polling locations on Election Day. St. Louis County election officials have taken full responsibility for the situation and cooperated in this review.

Results

The Missouri Secretary of State's office immediately contacted the Board to determine what caused the insufficient number of ballots at the affected polling places on Election Day. The Board confirmed the ballot shortage occurred in polling places with precincts requiring more than one type of ballot. Such polling places may require a different number of ballots per ballot type for these precincts. For example, a polling place may require 20 ballots for one precinct and 200 for another precinct. The Board confirmed that the number and type of ballots provided to these polling places for these precincts was reversed, resulting in there being too many ballots in one style and not a sufficient amount in another style. This error did not occur in every

polling place that had multiple types of ballots.

The Board used their electronic voting machines during the March 2016 Presidential Preference Primary. Due to the proximity of time between the Presidential Preference Primary and the municipal election, the Board decided to provide paper ballots to voters in the municipal election.

The Board compiled and proofed the information necessary to determine the number of ballots for the precincts in each polling place (referred to as a matrix). After this matrix was completed, the Board received court orders to include two municipalities on the ballot. The Board then revised the matrix for the

polling place precinct ballots. This matrix was not fully proofed and the matrix mistakes were not discovered, resulting in an inadequate number of ballots for certain ballot styles being delivered to approximately 60 precincts. The Board took full responsibility for this human error.

On Election Day, once the Board identified the insufficient number of ballots, they contacted the vendor who provided the ballots. The vendor provided any ballot print overruns and printed additional ballots. The Board began using their on demand ballot printers. They also issued a press release attempting to notify voters of the issue and that they could go to the Board's central voting location or return to their designated polling place once the ballots were provided.

This ballot shortage resulted in the Board seeking an order to keep the polls open. The Missouri Court of Appeals, Eastern District, issued an order extending the voting for two hours until 9 p.m. at the affected precincts and to make provisional voting available to those qualified voters that verbally affirmed that they tried to vote during regular voting hours.

Under Missouri law, Section 115.115, RSMo., the local election authority designates the polling places for each precinct within which a voter is entitled to vote. Missouri law, Section 115.247, RSMo., further states that each local election authority is required to provide

all ballots for every election within its jurisdiction.

The Board has confirmed that they are continuing to review and revise their internal process to ensure that they do not allow this to happen again.

At a minimum, the Board should consider including in their internal procedures:

- necessary steps to ensure the appropriate number and type of ballots are ordered and delivered to each polling place;
- written process, including an employee checklist, to ensure that teams of at least two individuals review the entire matrix for the precinct ballots for each polling place after every change to the matrix;
- a review by appropriate supervisors, including both directors, to ensure that all the required steps were fully completed after every change to the matrix;
- training for every employee on the mandatory proofing procedures after every change to the matrix;
- call-in plan with each polling place on Election Day to assess the level of ballots at the beginning and throughout the day;
- develop a written contingency plan for rapid distribution if call-ins indicate a potential ballot shortage.